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BACK TO THE FRONT TO GET THE ACTION

Details Given on Dobrynin's Visit to Inform Johnson of Intervention in Prague

Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, Aug. 23 —

Congressional leaders entered from a two-hour briefing at the White House today strongly supporting President Johnson's handling of the Czechoslovak crisis.

Mr. Johnson had invited the key Congressional figures—27 in all—to a full-scale review of world affairs. In addition to a briefing on the situation provoked by the Soviet Union's military occupation of Czechoslovakia on Tuesday, the President informed the delegation of current conditions in the Middle East and in Vietnam. Democratic leaders, several of whom were flown in Government aircraft direct from the scene of the coming Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and Republicans alike agreed that the United States must turn first to the United Nations and seek there to bring Soviet conduct in Czechoslovakia.

Widespread Rumors Congressional Leaders, Pleaded by President on Czechoslovakia and Voice Their Support

Hopes for U.N. Action
Senator Richard B. Russell, Democrat of Georgia and chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, appeared to sum up the views of the leadership. On emerging from the White House at 3 P.M., he told newsmen that the United States was not called upon to respond to the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia by armed force or through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

"I hope we'll pursue it in the U.N," he said. He added, however, that "we've lost so much ground there that we can't even get a denunciation of the Soviet Union."

Daily today the Soviet delegation to the United Nations, using its 105th veto to date, succeeded in blocking a Security Council draft resolution condemning the invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia and demanding the withdrawal of Communist-bloc troops.

Pressure for Spending Seen
Representative George H. Mahon, Democrat of Texas, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, forecast increased pressures in the months ahead for greater defense spending. He also suggested that the United States, which has spent \$4-billion to date for a preliminary anti-ballistic missile system, would have to spend still more until there was an ironclad mutual disarmament agreement with Soviet Russia.

"We can't negotiate with the Russians from a position of weakness," he said.

The White House press secretary, George Christian, had declined earlier to confirm or deny widespread reports that President Johnson and the Soviet Premier, Alexsei Kosygin, had been planning to meet to discuss world issues before the Czechoslovak invasion occurred. On the other hand, Soviet diplomats here confirmed the report, although they said that the idea had now been suspended indefinitely.

Government informants left this impression, however, that such a meeting was still high on the President's list of priorities before he leaves office next Jan. 20.

C.I.A. Given Priority

Mr. Mahon, in speaking with newsmen, took special pains to point out that he termed the ex-external job performed by the Central Intelligence Agency in keeping appropriate Government officials apprised of recent movements by Soviet and other Eastern European troops intervention in Czechoslovakia.

Nothing his role as chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee that handles annual funds for the intelligence agency, Mr. Mahon appeared to be rebutting recent press and Congressional comment critical of what was termed the C.I.A.'s failure to warn the President and his advisers of the invasion possibility.

Last week, for instance, Secretary Rusk was reported to have said at a private meeting here that in his opinion the "Czechs have won" the test of wills with the Soviet Union over their right to pursue their liberalization program.

Mr. Mahon disclosed that Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence, had led off today's session with Congressional leaders. White House sources confirmed that United States intelligence had closely watched Soviet and Eastern European troops movements and had consistently warned the National Security Council that Soviet armed intervention still remained a continuing possibility.

In detailing for the first time the sequence of events on Tuesday night, the sources said that the Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly F. Dobrynin, telephone Walt W. Rostow, special Presidential assistant for national security affairs, at 7:05 P.M. Mr. Dobrynin said that he had an urgent oral message for the President but that the transition from Russian into English would keep him at the embassy until 8 P.M. He asked if he could see the President then.

Mr. Johnson told Mr. Rostow to inform Secretary of State Dean Rusk and, provided he agreed, to invite Mr. Dobrynin at 8. This was done, although Mr. Rusk pointed out that he had a prior commitment to testify at that hour on a foreign-policy plank before the National Democratic Committee.

Invitation Extended
Mr. Rusk asked that he be notified immediately at the committee session if, as many suspected, the urgent Soviet concern concerned Czechoslovakia.

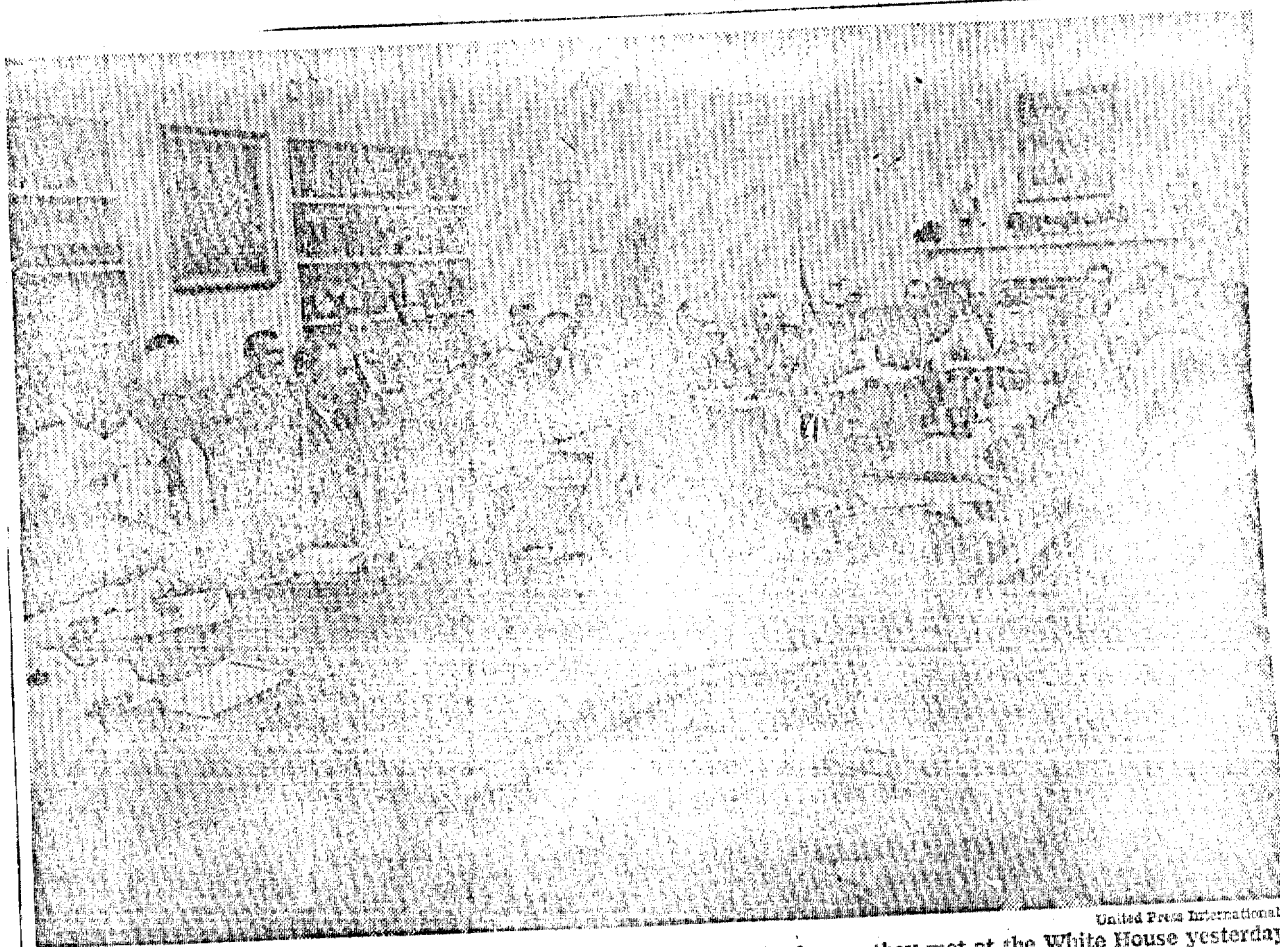
Mr. Dobrynin arrived at the White House diplomatic entrance in the rear at 8 P.M. and waited in Mr. Rostow's office for a few minutes until the President was free. Then he and Mr. Rostow joined the President in the Cabinet room. A few pleasantries were exchanged and the Soviet Ambassador pulled a paper from his pocket and read his own handwritten translation of the address now part of history.

When Mr. Dobrynin finished, Mr. Johnson quickly thanked him and said that, after conferring with his colleagues, he would be in touch with him later. Mr. Dobrynin was escorted to the door by Mr. Rostow and drove away.

Today, the State Department sharply repudied press comment alleging that the United States and the Soviet Union had last understanding on the respective "spheres of influence."

"The U.S. has never entered into any sphere-of-influence agreements or undertaking with anyone anywhere in the world," said Robert J. McCloskey, State Department spokesman, in a special statement. Any suggestion that the United States has given the Soviet Union reason to believe that the United States would be in different to events in Czechoslovakia, Mr. McCloskey said, is "naïve and totally without foundation."

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CONFERENCE ON CZECH CRISIS: President Johnson and Congressional leaders as they met at the White House yesterday

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